

Joseph Beauvais House
Main and Merchant Street,
Saint Genevieve
Saint Genevieve County
Missouri

HABS No. MO-1121

HABS
MO,
97-SAIGEN,
20-

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
DISTRICT OF MISSOURI

MULTIPLE
ADDENDUMS
FOLLOW

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
W.T. Trueblood, District Officer,
1520 Chemical Building, St. Louis, Mo.

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
DISTRICT OF MISSOURI (NO. 1.)

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20.

PROJECT NO. Mo-121

Joseph V. Beauvais House
Ste. Genevieve, Mo.

This house was built in the year 1785 by Joseph V. Beauvais one of the first inhabitants of Ste. Genevieve.

In the year 1846 the house was purchased by L.C. Menard. Mr. Menard was Mayor of Ste. Genevieve in 1853.

The building is now owned by F. Anton Weiler of Ste. Genevieve.

This is a one story and attic, vertical log construction, weatherboarded. Gable roof surmounted by large dormers. Large porch across the front.

Information: Fair Play

EUGENE L. PLITTSCH.

EW 4/3/57

HABS
MO,
97-SAIGEN,
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Joseph Beauvais House
North Main Street
Ste. Genevieve
Ste. Genevieve County
Missouri

HABS NO. MO-1121

Reduced Copies of Measured Drawings

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240

HABS
MO
97-SAIGEN,
20-

An addendum to:
Joseph V. Beauvais House
20 South Main Street
Ste. Genevieve
Ste. Genevieve County
Missouri

HABS No. MO-1121

PHOTOCRAPHS

ADDENDUM
FOLLOWS

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20013-7127

Addendum to
Joseph V. Beauvais House
20 South Main Street
Ste. Genevieve
Ste. Genevieve County
Missouri

HABS No. MO-1121

HABS
MO,
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PHOTOGRAPHS

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, DC 20013-7127

ADD. IN. 11
1120WS

Addendum to
Vital St. Gemme Beauvais House I
(Joseph V. Beauvais House)
20 South Main Street
Ste. Genevieve
Ste. Genevieve County
Missouri

HABS No. MO-1121

HABS
MO,
97-SAIGEN,
20-

REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, DC 20013-7127

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
VITAL ST. GEMME BEAUVAIS HOUSE I

HABS
MO,
97-5A16E
20-

Location: 20 S. Main Street, Ste. Genevieve, St. Genevieve
County, Missouri, 63670.

Present Owner: Mr. and Mrs. Jerry Grindstaff

Present Occupant: Mr. and Mrs. Jerry Grindstaff

Present Use: Residence

Significance: This house is made of vertical cedar logs set directly in the ground--one of just three surviving palisadoed houses (poteaux en terre). This distinctive creole type was the most widely used in the French Period in Ste. Genevieve, a National Historic Landmark Historic District.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of Erection: c. 1792. The house was built for Vital St. Gemme Beauvais (1746-1816), uncle of the owner of the same name of the stone house on St. Mary's Road, and his wife Felicite Janis. Dendrochronological analysis indicated the south half of the house was built in 1792 or shortly thereafter, and the north half added about 1800. The north half was shortened 14 feet between 1894 and 1901. Dormers were added to the house before 1936 leading to major alterations to the rafters and trusses in the roof framing.
2. Original and subsequent owners: Legal description: Part of survey No. 145 and block No. 4 in the city of Sainte Genevieve, beginning at the southwest corner of survey 145 and running with the east line of Main Street north 5 degrees 35 seconds west 65 feet to the northwest corner of strip of land 5 feet wide as described in Book 110-83. Then with the north line of said parcel north 79 degrees 45 seconds east 87 feet to the northeast corner of said 5 foot parcel. Then south 5 degrees 35 seconds east 5 feet to corner. Then north 79 degrees 45 seconds east 77 feet to the northwest corner of parcel (150-145). Then south 12 degrees 30 seconds east 60 feet to the southwest corner of parcel as described in 150-145. Then south 79 degrees 45 seconds west 159.5 feet to beginning or the east line of Main Street.

Chain of title:

- a. February 11, 1817, by will of Vital St. Gemmes Beauvais (dated February 8, 1817) to Felicite Janis Beauvais, widow of the deceased and children. Deed book B, page 443.
 - b. August 5, 1846, quit claim by heirs of Felicite Beauvais, widow of Vital Beauvais, deceased. Joseph V. Beauvais and Matilda, Leon Bte, and Felicite Beauvais, Mary Bogy, Anthony and Bertha Huck, Julien Larsot(?), Catherine Valle and her husband Francis B. Valle, Desilse(sp?) St. Gemme and Augustus St. Gemme Rosine and Porter L. Menard, Susan and Midard(?), Isidore and Mary Leclerc, Edman and Ann Leclerc to L. Cyprian Menard. Deed book I, page 142.
 - c. August 10, 1846, general warranty deed between heirs, legal representatives of Felicite Janis Beauvais, widow of Vital Beauvais, deceased. Joseph V. Beauvais and Mathilde, Jean Bts Beauvais and Felicite, Mary Bogy, Julia Jarot(?), Catherine Valle and Francis B. Valle, Anthony Huck and Bertha, Desilia St. Gemme and Augustus St. Gemme, Rosine Menard and Peter I. Menard, Susan Menard and Minard(?) Menard, Isidore Leclerc and Mary, Edward Leclerc and Ann to Louis Cyprian Menard for \$500.00. Deed book 41, page 386.
 - d. October 19, 1876, by will of Louis C. Menard, deceased to Augustine Menard, widow of deceased. Value appraised \$800.00, deed book 41, page 391.
 - e. June 8, 1888, general warranty deed between Augustine Menard to Augustine C. Schneider, wife of Charles Schneider for \$1,000.00. Deed book 40, page 254.
 - f. April 1893, general warranty deed between Charles L. Schneider, et al by sheriff of Sainte Genevieve, Charles H. Biel to William W. Wilder for \$131.00. Deed book 47, page 35.
 - g. March 26, 1917, general warranty deed between William W. Wilder and Sophia M. Wilder, his wife to F. Anton Weiler for \$2,000.00. Deed book 79, page 400.
 - h. April 19, 1968, general warranty deed between Mary U.V. Weiler widow of F. Anton Weiler to Norbert B. and Francis O. Donze. Deed book 181, page 195.
 - i. July 29, 1980, general warranty deed between Norbert B. Donze and Francis O. Donze to Alfred J. Keiser. Deed book 299, page 87.
3. Original plans and construction: The house as completed about 1800 was probably a two-room wide structure with a central chimney and double hearth. There appears to have been a front and back gallery running the length of the house.

4. Alterations and additions: The house was remodeled into a three-room dwelling with a fourth room (kitchen) added to the south-east of the house forming an L-plan. The gallery at the back of the house has also been altered to follow the L-shape. Sanborn maps indicate the southeast corner was added before 1894. The central fireplace was reduced in size to open only into the center room (living room).

B. Historical Context:

Ste. Genevieve was one of the most important French colonial settlements in the mid-Mississippi valley, and the one that best preserves the architecture of that period. The house is one of three examples of poteaux-en-terre construction in the region. The Beauvais Family, the builders of the house, was one of the largest in the area at this period as well as one of the most wealthy and influential.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: This is a large example of vertical log construction, poteaux en terre. Its plan, general form, and detail are characteristic of creole architecture.
2. Condition of fabric: very good

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: One story on a partial basement, 62'-5" across the front and 35' deep.
2. Foundations: None for palisaded wall construction; random cut stone, pier support for floors.
3. Walls: Vertical, hewn, cedar logs, infilled with bouzillage, plastered or sheathed with horizontal clapboards.
4. Structural system, framing: Earthfast vertical log structure carrying a plate, hewn logs closely spaced. The remains of the elaborately framed king-post trusses are still visible in the attic, but the lower one half of the original roof structure was cut away when the roof was remodeled to allow the addition of the second story.
5. Porches: A typical French colonial gallery on the front and back of the house survive. Porch posts of red cedar. Secondary rafters extend over the gallery giving the characteristic double pitch to the roof.

6. Chimneys: A central chimney with stone foundation and brick upper construction carries one fireplace. A small chimney at the south end is evident in a Dunker photo.
7. Openings: A principal entrance at the center of the front of the house opens into the largest room of the house. Secondary entrances are at the south of the front of the house, at the north at the back of the house, and at the southeast of the house on the north wall leading into the kitchen. The two front entrances were probably principal entrances originally with entrances or windows placed directly opposite them. A separate entrance under the rear gallery leads into the cellar.
 - a. Doorways and doors: One entrance door has lights. A board and batten door leads into the cellar.
 - b. Windows and shutters: Double hung windows, the majority being six lights over six lights, or two over two survive in the upper story. Louvered shutters are found on the lower story windows.
8. Roof:
 - a. Shape, covering: Metal covering over earlier wood shingles.
 - b. Cornice, eaves: Projecting rake with soffit applied to underside of rafters. No eave projection, boxed in plate at eave line of the porch.
 - c. Dormers: Added in the twentieth century, before 1936.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans:
 - a. First floor: The 1939 HABS drawings show a conjectural original plan with two large rooms to either side a central chimney, with two smaller rooms at either end opening off the two large rooms. Evidence for this is not conclusive, but the plan is possible. The present plan is the result of alterations discussed above. There is a large central room (living room) flanked by two narrower rooms at either side (dining room and bedroom), each running the depth of the house with access to the front or rear gallery. An addition

(kitchen) is at the southeast corner of the house and leads into the dining room.

- b. Cellar: Unfinished cellar space. When the kitchen wing was added, a cellar space was dug out and connected with the cellar under the original house, exposing at the point of connection, the vertical log wall construction down to its base. This provided the evidence for the detail shown in the HABS drawings.
 - c. Attic: The original simple open attic space was remodeled in the twentieth century into three bedrooms.
- 2. Stairways: The present boxed stairway is an alteration of the original, which was in approximately the same position.
 - 3. Flooring: Wood floors. The second story floor, originally the attic floor, is of massive hewn timber construction, with timbers placed abutting over the two south rooms.
 - 4. Wall and ceiling finish: Plaster walls with chair rails. Exposed ceiling beams, approximately 6" deep x 8" wide.
 - 5. Openings: A variety of panelled doors survive, mostly of the three and four panelled type.
 - 6. Decorative features and trim: Chair rail in lower story rooms. A fireplace with rectangular opening framed by wooden pilasters, a plain frieze and simple mantle shelf survives in excellent condition, but is probably not original to the house.
 - 7. Mechanical equipment: Heating, lighting, and plumbing are modern additions.
- D. Site:
- 1. General setting and orientation: The house faces west on Main Street, a prime location in the new town when the house was built. The lot today has a small front yard and a garden behind.
 - 2. Historic landscape design: There is a small garden at the rear of the lot. Plantings include two silver maple, three red bud, one catalpa, one magnolia, and four apple trees.
 - 3. Outbuildings: A garage with driveway access to

Main Street and a smokehouse adjacent to the kitchen are on the grounds.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- A. Early Views: Early photographs of the house, c. 1900-1920, are preserved in the Vincent J. Dunker Collection, owned by Mrs. Elmer L. Donze, 15 South Fourth Street, Ste. Genevieve, copy negatives owned by the University of Missouri-Columbia Ste. Genevieve Project.
- B. Bibliography:
1. Primary and unpublished sources: Deed records in the Ste. Genevieve County Clerk's Office, County Courthouse. Other records in the Ste. Genevieve Archives (SGA), collected on microfilm, Western historical Manuscripts Collection, University of Missouri-Columbia.
 2. Secondary and published sources:

Ekberg, Carl J., Colonial Ste. Genevieve, An Adventure on the Mississippi Frontier (Gerald, Missouri: The Patrice Press, 1985).

Franzwa, Gregory M., The Story of Old Ste. Genevieve (St. Louis: The Patrice Press, 1967).

Peterson, Charles E., "Early Ste. Genevieve and its Architecture," The Missouri Historical Review, XXV:2 (January 1941), pp. 207-232.

Porterfield, Neil H. "Ste. Genevieve, Missouri," in John Francis McDermott, editor, Frenchmen and French Ways in the Mississippi Valley (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1969), pp. 141-177.

Writers' Program of the Work Projects Administration, Missouri, A Guide to the "Show Me" State (Missouri State Highway Department, 1941).

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

This project was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) team of the Rocky Mountain Regional Office, National Park Service, under the direction of Historical Architect Thomas G. Keohan. Documentation was carried out during the summer of 1985 at the HABS field office in Ste. Genevieve, Missouri, by project supervisor Osmund Overby (University of Missouri-Columbia), project architects James Q. Marsh (Hemet, California), William D. Cesaletti (Keaau, Hawaii), and Terance A.

Gruenhagen (North Dakota State University), and project historian
Claudia A. Barbero (University of Missouri-Columbia).

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January 17, 1987

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JOSEPH V. BEAUVAIS HOUSE
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National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20013